

Good Day Ladies and Gentlemen of the committee,

My name is Matt Bottali from Danbury. I'm here to testify against Raised bill #6962 (An Act Concerning Firearms Safety).

Here I am in Hartford, again for the second time in as many years to testify against proposed gun related bills. I'm not a criminal, yet here I am testifying as though I am. I'm not a bad person, yet here I am to defend my rights against those who would like to see citizens such as myself disarmed. I'm a gun owner who is being charged with a crime that hasn't happened yet. I'm a gun owner who is being found guilty by CT legislators simply by association of a madman who went on a despicable killing spree.

Personally as a father of two, I do secure my firearms in my household and most of this bill would not apply to me. I have spent thousands of dollars on equipment to keep my firearms safe, and secure when they're not on my person. Even though this may not apply directly to me, I am here to testify against this bill. This bill's language is far too broad. As written, it is a catch-all, "gotcha" law to find a gun owner guilty of a crime he or she didn't commit.

The vague and general writing of this bill gives a huge legal scope, a scope that can be levied against a gun owner who did nothing wrong. The bill says, in section b "the provision of this section shall not apply if a person obtains the firearms as a result of an unlawful entry to any premise by any person". This section clearly puts gun owners in the clear if someone breaks into a house and steals secured firearm (a federal crime). That's a good thing.

However, here's a situation that isn't covered. Bob is an elderly, retired gentleman with arthritis. He lives alone in a not-so-great section of town. Due to his arthritis he keeps his revolver in his nightstand. Working a combination on a safe would be very cumbersome with his aching hands, especially in a stressful situation where a defensive firearm use may be necessary. Since Bob lives alone, without minors, he doesn't have to secure his firearm in his house. However if

this law is passed, here is how Bob goes from enjoying retirement to enjoying federal prison.

Bob's pipes burst in his bathroom wall as a result of the brutally cold winter we just had. Bob calls a plumber to fix the problem. The plumber comes to fix the pipes. While Bob is talking to the plumber, the plumber's assistant starts working to fix the problem. In the course of repairing the damage the assistant has to go into Bob's bedroom to access the closet to get at the interior bathroom wall. While he's in there he decides to snoop through Bob's nightstand. Well, guess what's in there, you guessed it, the revolver... Bob never thought to put his revolver on his person. After all, the problem was in the bathroom, not the bedroom. The next night the assistant holds up a liquor store and shoots the clerk in the process. Bob is now charged with criminally negligent storage of a firearm and is processed as a class D Felon because he hired in a plumber to fix his leaking pipes.

Keep in mind stealing a firearm is a felony crime already, although now it will spread the blame on Bob instead of the real culprit, the criminal. I'm here to remind you that gun owners are not the problem. Criminally minded folks that would seek to harm others for their own gain are the problem. Honest citizens like myself and the hundreds of others here today are not the problem. Yet we continue to be the focus of proposed gun laws. Your continued effort to legislate criminal activity continues to target the wrong people. My friends and I are the good guys, start treating us as such. I encourage you to vote against this bill and instead focus on curtailing criminal behavior. Start holding those who commit violent crimes accountable for their actions, impose the maximum sentences, increase the sentences if you have to, and for the love of our children, stop the early release of violent offenders!

Thank you for your time.